
BEST PRACTICES MANUAL

**For Service Providers Assisting
Kinship Caregivers in the State of Michigan**

Developed By

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INTRODUCTION

Factors such as parental substance abuse, incarceration, HIV/AIDS, death and poverty are causing growing numbers of grandparents and other relatives to step forward and help keep families together. According to the 2000, more than six million children across the country are living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives. The Census further found that nearly 5.8 million grandparents are living in households with one or more of their own grandchildren under the age of eighteen. More than 2.4 million of these grandparents are primarily responsible for meeting the basic needs of these children. In Michigan, the numbers are no less surprising. The 2000 U.S. Census identified that 166,705 grandparents live in households with one or more of their grandchildren. Of these grandparents, 42% or 70,016 grandparents reported being responsible for the care of these children.

The National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP), a program authorized in the 2000 amendments to the Older Americans Act and administered by the Administration, offers five categories of supportive services to family caregivers: information, assistance with accessing services, respite, supplemental services and support groups and education. Grandparents and other older relatives who are providing primary care for dependent children under the age of eighteen are among those caregivers eligible for support through this new program. In Michigan, each area agency on aging allocates NFCSP funds for kinship caregiver programs and works with local communities to develop services that meet the needs of these non-traditional families.

This Best Practices Manual was created in response to a survey completed by Michigan's sixteen area agencies on aging. The manual contains resources and tools to be adapted and used to provide the most appropriate and extensive services possible to kinship caregivers. The wide spectrum of experience in providing services to grandparents and other relatives raising children has resulted in diverse programs at varying stages of development. To accommodate the needs of both developing and established programs, the manual has been divided into three categories: Initial, Continuing, and Advanced Strategies. In addition to these categories, this manual is also divided into general services for all kinship care household members and services more specific to the children who are being cared for. Additional resources are identified at the end of the manual.

Our thanks to Ms. Krista Powers, an Office of Services to the Aging student intern from the University of Michigan School of Social Work and a Hartford Foundation Grant to Strengthen Geriatric Social Work Fellow, for researching and developing the Best Practices Manual. Krista's dedication and enthusiasm for the project is greatly appreciated

FAMILY CAREGIVER SERVICES

For Kinship Care Household Members

Initial Strategies

When working to identify kinship caregivers, look outside the aging network. Successful places to start in the search for caregivers would be schools, Head Start programs, and other local child care service agencies.



Steer clear of initiating use of the label “caregiver”, especially when working to identify grandparents or other relatives raising grandchildren. Often times community members do not consider themselves caregivers, even though their daily tasks would easily fall within the roles of a caregiver outlined by most service providers. This lack of acknowledgement could be due to either the sudden nature of their caregiving role, or the gradual transition into this role. Other barriers include kinship caregiver embarrassment or distrust of service systems. In addition, a member of a minority group may be less likely to use the term ‘caregiver’ if their cultural norms prescribe the expectation that the family unit is a central focus and sharing a household or care is a standard practice. Ultimately, it is more important for service providers to reach individuals who are providing care to another than it is to convince the caregiver to adopt a title that may be uncomfortable or unfamiliar to them. Other necessary strategies for successfully reaching kinship care households, such as partnership and appropriate service provider attitudes, are discussed further in this section.

Professionals must maintain an attitude of "partnership" with the kinship care household members. Workers cannot come into the kin-care home ordering, commanding and treating kinship caregivers as if they knew little or nothing about caring for the child. Furthermore, each kinship household has strengths to share and must not be regarded as a ‘broken’ family. Partnership is required since many, if not all the kinship caregivers, have known the children who are placed in their homes since birth and have developed practical ways of functioning on a daily basis.

Be flexible when creating programs and resources for kinship care households. Each participant will have different needs. It is crucial to take note of what is and is not working for participants and resculpt the program as often as necessary.

Materials must be presented to the kinship care household members in an environment that is free from criticism, blame and judgment. There is no place for any of these three attitudes or actions in a successful kinship care educational program.

Create support groups and services based on the expressed needs of kinship caregivers. Groups can meet weekly, semi-weekly, or monthly depending on participant interest. Some group participants may benefit from scheduled, educational sessions, while others may prefer

unstructured time in order to share personal experiences and access feedback from other kinship caregivers. Both needs can be accommodated through dividing the meeting time in half, or by alternating the meeting style between educational sessions and unstructured sharing every other meeting. Various formats can also be employed. Videos, role plays, individual speakers or a panel of speakers may present to the kinship caregivers. Time should always be allotted for open questions from the grandparents. In order to assure maximum support for kinship caregivers, provisions should be made so that childcare is available to the kinship care household youngsters. Further suggestions for sessions with children are suggested below and in other sections of this Manual.

Below is a list of topics that will likely be of interest to kinship caregivers. These topics are a good starting point for newly established support groups. Service providers should begin to establish relationships with community resources that specialize in these areas.

<i>Parenting skills</i>	<i>Issues of shame and guilt</i>
<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Problem solving skills</i>
<i>Legal advocacy</i>	<i>Tax issues</i>
<i>Medical issues and awareness</i>	<i>Family dynamics</i>
<i>Education</i>	<i>Stress</i>
<i>Difficult learning styles</i>	<i>Mental health and substance abuse issues</i>
<i>Affordable housing</i>	<i>Television as an educational tool</i>
<i>Landlord/Tenant issues</i>	<i>Recommended readings from a local bookstore or librarian</i>
<i>Guardianship</i>	<i>Challenges in marriage as a result of extra family members</i>
<i>Family public assistance programs</i>	<i>Grandparents as primary sexuality educators</i>
<i>Caregiver self-care strategies</i>	
<i>Effective communication skills</i>	
<i>Nutrition</i>	
<i>Issues of grief and loss</i>	
<i>Anger management skills</i>	

Provide separate activities for children during support group meeting times. Just as sessions for grandparents will take various forms, groups for kids can be either play or work focused. The important component is to have individuals available during all support group sessions to assist with the young kinship care household members. This time is often a form of respite for the caregiver and the children can gain from interacting with peers in similar living situations. Additional themes and models for use with children during support group sessions are listed in the children section of this manual.

When creating support groups, accommodate participant's needs by providing transportation. In order to provide the intended community and support of group sessions, members must be present and free from the additional stress of figuring out the practicalities of participation. In fact, the most frequent barrier to service recognized by providers is transportation. Some kinship caregivers no longer drive, or if they do, it's only during daylight hours or in certain areas of town. Depending on the community and the location of the support group meeting, an agency can be creative in providing transportation. Bus routes and passes can be provided, an agency vehicle can transport participants, or taxis can be hired (preferably through a prearranged agreement with a specific taxi company to keep costs minimal).



Depending on the time of the support group, provide a meal or snack. Sharing a meal or food serves both functional and ritualistic purposes. By eliminating the stress of serving a meal *and* attending a meeting all in one day (even if the meeting is intended to provide support) caregivers are more likely to participate in sessions. Caregivers often express that relief from daily tasks, such as meal preparation, is a valuable gift. In addition, sharing a meal with the greater community of kinship care household members may produce a more comfortable environment for sharing stories, laughter, or frustrations. Having a meal as part of the support group meeting ritual may prove to be one of the most positive components for members of kinship care households.



Consider the physical abilities of kinship caregivers and make appropriate accommodations. In addition to challenges with transportation, finances, or food, caregivers may also experience barriers with mobility, sight, or hearing. Yet, kinship caregivers may not be forthcoming with their needs. This equates to the need for a trusting relationship with the caregivers, so that questions can be asked which yield truthful answers. Individual plans must be established for each caregiver, however trends will often be noticed and interventions appropriate for more than one caregiver. Assure that activity locations are wheel chair or stroller accessible, have hand rails next to steps, proper lighting, and extra rugs or furniture removed which may be a fall hazard to elders or youngsters.

Provide a user-friendly resource directory. As kinship caregivers are introduced to the community network of services, a standard resource directory should be provided for use at home. Assure that the print is readable and spiral binding (if affordable) accommodates the directory to remain open to the page being used. Tabs to separate sections provide quick access to the resource being searched. Sections may include some of the following: child care services, schools, support groups (at schools, aging agencies, family center organizations, battered victim agencies), and police and fire stations.

Create a lending library available for community kinship care households. Videos, books, and magazines should be included and can either be educational or supportive. For example, one video may demonstrate productive ways for a grandparent to help a grandchild with schoolwork, while another video may be a recommended PG movie that other caregivers have been comfortable showing to their grandkids for entertainment. Literature also can be educational or enjoyable. The key is to assure kinship care households are aware of the lending library and that it is established in an accessible location. Some communities may also develop a mail order and retrieval system for the lending items. This mail order system is a productive way for rural communities to provide supportive materials to kinship caregivers.

Provide tickets to children's concerts. Tickets may be for visiting performances or productions put on by local children. Service providers can publicize and support these events by encouraging and providing tickets for community grandparents and grandchildren to attend.



Host a "Walk on the Wild Side" day at the zoo. Through collaboration with the local zoo, an annual event can accommodate kinship caregiving families and provide a day of fun. The level of involvement by the service provider is flexible and can span from simply arranging

the day to hosting a picnic luncheon, or extra adult participation to assure a day free of stress for grandparents and a day of fun for grandkids.



Broaden cultural awareness through involvement in local events. Purchase tickets and assist with transportation to events such as First Night, museum exhibitions, story telling events, or plays. Formal or informal gatherings can be held before or after attending events to enhance the kinship care community relationships.

Establish relationships with parks and local recreation departments. By cultivating an ongoing relationship with local recreation sites, service providers can easily host day trips, picnics, and recreation activities for kinship care families. Be sure publicity for activities is being circulated through the kinship care service provider as well as the recreation site.

Send monthly newsletters to kinship care households and other community partners. Newsletters are a productive way of sharing local statistics on how many people in specific neighborhoods are providing kinship care, current programs available, and upcoming events. Newsletters are an open forum for creativity, and can highlight exceptional caregivers, youth art or schoolwork, or local partnerships.

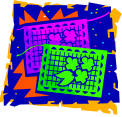
Create a program component to assist kinship caregivers with emergency needs. Emergency needs span from utility bills to children's clothing to lunch money. While it may be difficult to make funds available to accommodate all the needs that arise for kinship care households, a pool of money can be reserved for this purpose. Specific policies and procedures should be established before making this service available to community kinship caregivers. Clearly established guidelines on the amount of emergency services accessed and frequency can prevent complications that may arise as the emergency resources are available. Service providers should also research other emergency resources available in the community and the policies established on access at each individual resource. If certain emergency support is only available a limited number of times, referrals should be conscious to not exhaust the caregiver's resources for emergency assistance in one situation, unless the caregiver is aware and chooses to do so.

Continuing Strategies



Utilize various therapy models during support group sessions. Informal, open sharing groups are beneficial for kinship caregivers. In fact, these types of 'lay support groups', in which members take responsibility for their meeting times and discussions, have proven highly successful and empowering to participants. That is not to say that more structured interventions cannot also be utilized to support kinship care household members. Suggestions for this type of session include genagrams, goal setting, problem solving skills, role-play, family of origin work, and identification of feelings. The facilitator of the group should be familiar with the guided intervention technique and prepared for a wide range of responses before utilizing a new technique during a session.

Explore deeper family issues during support groups. While topics of daily functional concern are essential to discuss at support groups, more personal issues are also important to address. A topic related to the grief kinship caregivers feel in relation to their chemically addicted adult children is one example. These topics should also move into discussions of issues from kinship caregivers' own stories of abuse or substance dependency. For topics such as these, the facilitator should be a professional and prepared for a variety of responses.



There are multiple ways to conduct a group session, be creative and diverse in approaches. Develop life books, scrapbooks, photo albums, and journals to identify family strengths and challenges. These suggestions can be tailored to any age child or adult and be very therapeutic.

Host support groups at times most conducive to participant's schedules. Returning to the "be flexible" motto, solicit feedback from current support group participants and adapt according to their needs. Evenings, lunchtime, or weekends are some possible meeting times. Be respectful of support group time, yet also work within the culture established by participants. Service providers may find that support group sessions consistently start fifteen minutes late because participants stroll in late or mingle those first several minutes. If this were the culture of the environment, it would be counterproductive to enforce strict starting times. On the other hand, if a specific speaker is presenting, it is important to guide the session, stay task oriented and allot sufficient time for questions. Preparing the speaker and participants in advance is helpful so all parties have a sense of how the session will unfold.

Establish connections with local teens who can help watch children during sessions. Local churches are a good place to start. The YMCA or American Red Cross are two agencies that typically provide babysitter training, and would be good to link up with to provide youth in training with direct babysitting experience.



Create attendance incentives to encourage support group or event participation. Service providers have the opportunity to express their creativity and access various community services when establishing attendance incentives. Some programs may provide an incentive at every activity, while others may conduct drawings at randomly selected events. No matter what strategy is utilized, incentives may come in the form of restaurant or health spa gift certificates, grocery credit, coupons for an hour of babysitting, or small items from a local Dollar Store. Through relationships with local businesses, many of the incentive items could be donated. Be sure to make this concept appealing to the donating business as well by publicizing their support and inviting business leaders to community events sponsored by the kinship care provider agency.

Develop a packet to supplement the resource directory (as suggested in the General Household, Initial Strategies Section). Once kinship caregivers have access to local services as available through the resource directory, they will likely appreciate guidance regarding questions to ask and documentation necessary for each service. Questions should be provided in a precise, clear manner to extract the answers likely desired by the caregiver. Photocopies of paperwork necessary and a list of personal documents are helpful. Some providers may even be able to establish a system of access and assistance in using an agency photocopy machine for caregivers compiling information for various other services.

Further develop monthly newsletters to address the audience receiving them. Have separate newsletters, one for grandparents and one for grandchildren. If mailing costs are not an issue, receiving mail is a bonus for youngsters! If mailing and paper budgets are minimal, divide the newsletter into separate sections, one for the caregiver and one for the care recipient. Another option is to send newsletters electronically for recipients with computer access.



Create a coalition of supportive local agencies. Hospitals, churches, schools, and social service agencies are commonly thought of when building coalitions. The circle can expand beyond these agencies as well. Pulling in businesses, government agencies (i.e., post office, court system), shopping centers, and other non-profit organizations (i.e., Easter Seals, Hospices, Senior Health Centers) can be an innovative way to building new relationships. When working to establish a coalition, the key is to consider the other agency's self interests and benefits of investing time and resources in a partnership. Before presenting the concept of working collaboratively, do some research on the agency being approached. Discover their mission statement as well as current programs. Establish a logical link between the kinship care services and their work, whether their goals are to minimize employee absence, increase graduation rates and work force pool, or decrease community delinquency. By demonstrating the mutual benefits, more organizations will be willing to invest their resources.

Host a monthly grandparent breakfast. Creating a gathering place at an elementary school is ideal for grandparents who can drop their child off at school and then connect with other kinship caregivers. The specific elementary school location can rotate each month, given the number of schools in the community.

Host an annual "Grandparent Rap." This event brings together kinship caregivers from the community and provides a structured space for sharing resources, experiences, and feelings. A potluck can be combined with this annual event easily as well.

Find a creative way to honor Grandparent's Day in September each year.

Place friendly telephone calls to kinship care households. This is a good strategy for building relationships with service recipients. Weekly, semi-weekly, or monthly calls are a proactive way to stay connected and discover any potential areas of need before they become crisis issues. In addition, a relationship of trust is developed more quickly and service recipients may feel more comfortable contacting the service provider for support when the need arises, than if they were not familiar with staff members. If community kinship caregivers express interest, the service provider can assist in establishing peer friendly phone calls as well. Interested individuals become a support system for one another in this model.

Coordinate with the local Boys and Girls Club for respite opportunities. Arrange windows of time that grandparents are able to drop off children for two-hour increments. Trained staff would be present to provide supervision and recreation opportunities.



Formulate a childcare “swap” program. As the kinship households become familiar with one another through support groups and other services, inquire about interest in swapping childcare time. With great enough interest, this swap system can allow grandparents respite on a routine basis. Creating small groups of grandparents who “swap” childcare is preferred since having too many children involved in a swap will only create more stress and exhaustion for the grandparent whose turn it is to be responsible for care. Solid ground rules should be agreed upon before beginning this system, in an effort to minimize families taking advantage of one another (i.e. showing up late to pick up children, backing out when a turn comes up to watch the kids).

Grandparent’s night out! Help those kinship caregivers to take a break. Whether the caregivers do something as a group or separately, by hosting a pizza party and movies or other entertainment for the children, the grandparents will have time for themselves.

Provide homemaker services. Depending on the household needs, cleaning, cooking, laundry, or other assistance may be necessary. A contract with local home aid services should be established. Ideally, joint training should occur through this contracted partnership, in order to educate the home aid service workers to the potential needs and circumstances of the kinship households they will be working in, as well as education from the home aids as to what they might need to better accomplish their job. Investment in extensive training of this sort in the initiation of work will help assure greater satisfaction for all involved individuals.

Further develop recreational activities and opportunities. Activities such as roller skating, swimming, hiking, golfing, camping, kite flying, trips to the local aquarium, or arcade halls are some suggestions. The sky is the limit and creativity is the key.



Begin a family computer literacy program. Local businesses or education systems may be willing to donate old computers when upgrading their own supply. An area of the service provider’s facility can be set up as a computer lab that is available to kinship families during normal business hours. In addition, scheduled classes should be conducted to educate children and adults. Typing skills, internet surfing and document formation should be covered, as well as other areas of interest.



Develop an intergenerational book club. Enlist the help of an elder caregiver who is gifted in literature and willing to read stories to children and other participants. Monthly or semi-weekly gatherings can begin with story time and move into an activity based on the given story. Reading tutoring programs may also be developed, given the need.

Create a community closet, or thrift shop. Service providers can designate a room or portion of a room to be a closet of items open to kinship care families. Families should be encouraged to donate items as they outgrow them, as well as obtain other hand-me-downs. This give and take system can function on the honor system, sign in/out sheets, or under supervision of the service provider’s staff, depending on the community desires.

Host a cloths swap. This event can happen in conjunction with the above suggested cloths closet, or independently. In either situation, this event should be hosted bi-annually to accommodate winter and summer clothing swap.

Create an emergency pantry. Items such as diapers, formula, baby food, toothbrushes, baby wipes, etc. would be included in this pantry. Unlike the community closet, staff or volunteers would monitor this pantry. Precise guidelines and procedures should be outlined before providing this service, to assure items are available for true emergency situations.

Establish an agreement with a local bookstore to participate in a fundraising activity. Have the bookstore advertise and donate a percentage of all purchases towards kinship care programs.



Conduct a holiday fundraiser. This type of event can be feasible as it's just one time a year. One good suggestion is to have a local mall donate space and supplies while grandparents donate time to wrap gifts at Christmas time. No set price is necessary, rather allow people to donate an amount of their choice for the service. This fundraiser can span for the duration of a day, weekend, or entire week depending on the mall's donation as well as volunteer time.

Make yourself known! Setting up a booth at community events, speaking at public engagements, advertising via public service announcements, or using other media sources is a great (and necessary) idea for kinship caregiver service providers. Not only is this valuable in providing education to the general community, it's also good to create a solid name and be a visible agency in the community that others are comfortable collaborating with.

Advanced Strategies

Continue to expand the outings offered to kinship households. Outings can easily occur on a monthly basis when tapping into all the offerings of a community. Attend jazz concerts (or any musical performance), plays, museums, parks, shopping, lunch, etc.



Create a grandparent mentoring program. New kinship caregivers will benefit from stories and guidance from actual kinship caregivers, as a supplement to the services and education the agency provides. While seasoned kinship caregivers are familiar with the role, they should be guided if interested in mentoring others. Grandparent mentors should be trained to recognize the importance of balancing assisting the new caregiver and allowing them to grow into and experience the caregiver role for themselves.

Develop a Grandparent Advocate and Outreach Program. Hire a kinship caregiver grandparent to serve 20 hours per week as an advocate for other grandparents.

Provide research information to kinship caregivers, as well as community members. In efforts to educate kinship caregivers, use statistics and facts. Emphasize points such as the growing roles of kinship caregivers and government monetary investment in kinship household programs. Research and statistics may also be appealing to community partners or potential partners. Hard numbers and facts can demonstrate the needs and help a kinship care service provider link other community business and organization investment in this population.



Collaborate with a local university to create a parenting curriculum. Grandparents who find themselves in the role of parents once again may need a refresher course to expose them to the current issues that accompany childrearing. A curriculum can be modeled off of other parenting tools, but should be careful to consider the specific needs of a grandparent/grandchild relationship.

Conduct a parenting group. This suggested six week, two hour session education forum should provide kinship caregivers with a parent book, skill card, and home activity sheets for problem solving. The training would include video taped models of parents using skills and practice time to use their own personal skills on relevant issues.

Collaborate with local hospitals or Women's centers to provide periodic workshops of parenting skills and roles.

Provide informative session on legal issues faced by kinship households. As many of the "Advance Plan" items, this intervention involves collaborating with an outside agency. A local University law or Social work program are excellent places to start, as this partnership serves both parties by relaying the information needed to kinship caregivers and completing course assignments for the students. Social and legal issues of kinship care are often overwhelming and confusing, so guiding individuals with understandable terms and support can reduce the amount of stress and concern caregivers hold. This session can be done in numerous styles, during a support group, evening or weekend, or an annual legal clinic. An annual legal clinic should pull in many local resources, such as offering pro bono legal guidance in issues such as estate planning and wills, third party custody and family law, and benefits and assistance programs.

Connect with a local Consumers Credit. This partnership can address financial planning topics that are either new or ongoing for kinship caregivers who are handling unplanned or additional responsibilities.

Connect with a local Survivors of Homicide Victims Program. This partnership may pull in kinship caregivers who may have otherwise been forgotten. As outlined in the very first section of this manual, the first hurdle is to identify kinship caregivers. As an agency advances with their programs, a continued emphasis must be placed on reaching out to all kinship households in the community.



Form a "Grand Leaders" Group. This group would consist of regional support group leaders who meet quarterly to discuss experiences and barriers encountered in the groups they moderate.

Organize your collaborative forces. Host monthly advisory councils that include various community businesses and agencies with a vested interest in the kinship caregiving population.

Invite State Legislators to meetings. It is helpful to host periodic meetings aimed at articulating needs to political leaders. Not only does this create a working relationship, it also allows them to hear issues being faced on a routine basis.

Host a forum for political candidates. Investing time in political leaders is a way to keep your agency and cause in the front of leaders minds. While the intent is not to be political, awareness is critical.

Organize caregivers to testify at public hearings. This first key is to empowering caregivers to use their voice and tell their story. The second step is assisting the caregivers to know where, when, and to whom they are speaking. Some kinship caregivers will be natural speakers, while others may necessitate more guidance and reassurance. One-on-one meetings to develop speaking points are a good place to start. Next, the caregiver should have the opportunity to practice in front of peers and then graduate into other public forums such as support group or school board meetings, and ultimately public hearings.

Host educational workshops for community organizations and individuals. Partnerships with other community businesses and organizations can be cultivated and enhanced through educational sessions. Sessions should welcome staff from schools, child protective services, childcare centers, and family court professionals. Political leaders, community business stakeholders, and aging organizations would also benefit from participation. Workshops should be as creative and interactive as possible, in order to demonstrate the nature of kinship caregiving households and their needs. Time may be allotted for community members and professionals to share their successes or challenges of providing services, yet emphasis should be placed on supplying innovative ideas to act on, given the specific trends of need for community kinship caregivers.

Establish a liaison service to school counselors. By appointing one person to act as a liaison to community educators, deeper relationships can be established which accomplish better dialogue regarding practical issues and needs of kinship care households.

Create an online accessible ‘chat’ system. Kinship caregivers who have access to a computer and the internet, and who have either gone through the computer literacy program (suggested earlier in the General Household, Continuing Strategies Section) or already feel comfortable with computer use can benefit by yet another line of support and connection to other kinship caregivers. This vehicle of dialogue would be available based on caregiver participation, which likely could yield support during weekend or evening hours when agency services are typically finished for the day. Ongoing review of guidelines for a respectful chat room should be provided, however otherwise the participating kinship caregivers should drive this forum.



Empower kinship caregivers to engage in skill building activities. The goal of any support group, education forum, or supportive service is to teach and enhance functional skills for use within the daily lives of kinship caregivers. As new caregivers enter the system, seasoned kinship caregivers should be encouraged to play a role in educating and mentoring the new comers, as the various initial and continuing plans suggest in this manual. In order to take this to the next advanced stage, kinship caregivers should be encouraged reach out into the community and use the skills they have been learning. Skills such as planning, organizing, assertiveness, communication, leadership, and committee work must be exercised in real life settings to fully empower the kinship caregiver as well as benefit the greater community. Community work such as an April Child Abuse Prevention Campaign, fundraising activities, or a May educational conference are suggestions of activities that would benefit from participation of individuals with these skills.



Explore grandparent's hopes and dreams of leaving a legacy. Just as preplanning future issues of financing, kinship caregiver grandparents should be guided to consider the mark they want to leave behind. Without the support to realize the importance of their legacy, grandparents may not commit time to this aspect of their life, given their already hectic caregiving lifestyle. Considering one's legacy can be a gift of refocusing attention to personal goals as well as leaving additional benefits to grandkids.

CHILDREN SERVICES

For Kinship Care Household Members

Initial Strategies

Assist children attend summer camps. Set up a scholarship/sponsorship program to help families who would otherwise not be able to pay to participate in camp programs. Work in collaboration with local YMCAs, Salvation Army, 4H, churches and other organizations involved hosting children's camps. Be sure to evaluate the camp experience with the children afterwards, to assure future investments.

Explore children's common experience of abandonment. The core feelings and experiences should be addressed from the initiation of work with children. While children must be given time to form a trusting relationship with service provider staff and other children, it can be helpful to periodically bring up issues that all children are working through.

Continuing Strategies

Provide membership to Boys and Girls clubs.

Welcome and schedule community members to help with support group sessions.

University students, community service workers, and professional educators should all be resourced for support group facilitation. When approaching individuals or agencies, reinforce how participation will be helpful to them.



Incorporate tutoring assistance for youth into the support group session time. Youngsters should be supported in their school work both by kinship caregivers as well as outside community members. When welcoming individuals to help with child care, as suggested above, they should be encouraged to use their own strengths to assist children with school work. By establishing a routine of accomplishing school work first, and then play, children will be able to meet the expectations of the group setting. While it may be necessary to allow children to interact upon initiation of each group session, setting school work time as a priority demonstrates the importance of this work.

Invite police officers to children's section of support groups. Local officers must surround children in order to develop a healthy relationship. Police officers can teach safety and be available to interact with kids informally. The combination of formal and informal interactions with officers will allow children to realize the positive roles that police officers play in the community.

Host a biannual "All Star Show" for grandparents by grandchildren.

Advanced Strategies

Create a coloring book. A coloring book with images of seniors at various ages and a page for kids to insert pictures of their own family can be a fun and educational tool.

Expand child support group topics. Activities can range from theater games, role-playing, puppetry, sand trays, expressive arts, journals, and play therapy.

Assure that summer tutoring is available. Obtain grants to hire teachers to tutor children throughout the summer months. Funds may also be used to train kinship caregivers to be tutors.

Provide ongoing children's groups during the summer. Groups should continue in order to provide structure and support for kids. Issues such as anger management, conflict resolution, coping and life skills, and developing self-esteem can be covered.

RESOURCES

For Kinship Care Household Members

1. *Guidelines for Managing ADHD* can be obtained at <http://www.addvisor.com/index.htm>.
2. *Robert Lives With His Grandparents* costs \$14.95 and can be obtained from <http://shop.store.yahoo.com/renewcenter/roblivwithis.html>.
3. *Grandma's Hands*, 28 minute video.
4. *Grandparent Families: A Program of Hope*, 11-minute video that may help in the development of support groups. Available as free loan (in addition to other video resources) from:

<http://parenting.wsu.edu/Relative/videos.htm>
Hilari Hauptman
Aging and Adult Services Administration
P O Box 45600
Olympia, WA 98504-5600
360-725-2556 or 1-800-422-3263
Fax 360/438-8633
5. *Taking ADD to School*, is a children's book that is \$11.95 from http://www.addwarehouse.com/shopsite_sc/store/html/product431.html.
6. *Casey Family Programs, National Center for Resource Family Support* provides a variety of curriculum resources and examples used throughout the country for kinship care programs. http://www.casey.org/cnc/documents/tools_for_working_with_kinship_caregivers.pdf.

Casey Family Programs
National Center for Resource Family Support
1808 Eye Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20006-5427
800-295-6727
E-mail: cncinfo@casey.org
Internet: <http://www.casey.org/cnc>
7. *Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Communities, a resource for providers and kinship caregivers*.

203 Boone Hall
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
734-487-0372
Fax: 734-487-0284
E-mail: iscfc@emich.edu
Internet: <http://www.iscfc.emich.edu/kinship.html>

8. *Kinship Care: A Manual for Families* by Charles E. Confer, LSW, ACSW, RTC.

This skills-based text can be used as the text in group instruction or as an independent study for kinship caregivers. This text is available for \$9.50 each or 10+ copies for \$8.20 each from <http://www.afcr.com/content/9610-11.html>, or from a general text supplier, such as Amazon.

9. *Kinship Care: Trainer's Guide* by Charles E. Confer, LSW, ACSW, RTC. This kit is supplied intended to aid the facilitator in presenting curriculum to kinship care group members. It is supplied with step-by-step instructions, exercises, and overhead transparencies that can be used as a format and adapted for individual group work. This material is available for \$50.00 from <http://www.afcr.com/content/9610-11.html>, or from a general text supplier, such as Amazon.

10. *The Finance Project* is an organization based in Washington D.C. that provides Resources for policy makers, program administrators, service providers, researchers, academics and students, and others. A comprehensive clearinghouse of information and technical assistance resources to support decision-making that produces and sustains good results for children, families, and communities. This resource is available at <http://www.financeprojectinfo.org/WIN/default.asp>.

BEST PRACTICES MANUAL

**For Service Providers Assisting
Kinship Caregivers in the State of Michigan**

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